

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:  
entering user information into a processor controlling a dispensing cabinet;  
said processor unlocking certain doors of the dispensing cabinet in response to said user information;  
choosing a locate mode;  
identifying an item to be located;  
flashing a display positioned on a shelf within the cabinet with the number of items held by that shelf which are to be located;  
logging off; and  
locking the unlocked doors.
2. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising the step of entering patient information.
3. The method of claim 2 additionally comprising the steps of opening one of the unlocked doors, selecting a compartment, entering the number of items taken, and closing the opened door.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of choosing a locate mode includes choosing from among a dispense, locate, return and restock mode.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of identifying an item to be located includes one of picking an item from a pick list, inputting identifying information with a keypad, and barcode scanning.
6. A method, comprising:  
entering user information into a processor controlling a dispensing cabinet;  
said processor unlocking certain doors of the dispensing cabinet in response to said user information;  
entering patient information into the processor;  
choosing a locate mode;  
identifying an item to be located;  
flashing a display positioned on a shelf within the cabinet with the number of items held by that shelf which are to be located;  
opening an unlocked door behind which there is a shelf with a flashing display;

selecting a compartment;  
zeroing the display in response to the selection of a compartment;  
identifying the number of items taken from the selected compartment;  
displaying the number of items taken on the display;  
closing the opened door;  
logging off; and  
locking the unlocked doors.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein said step of choosing a locate mode includes choosing from among a dispense, locate, return and restock mode.

8. The method of claim 6 wherein said step of identifying an item to be located includes one of picking an item from a pick list, inputting identifying information with a keypad, and barcode scanning.

9. A method of identifying a shelf within a cabinet, said shelf carrying at least one item to be located by a user, said method comprising the step of causing a numeric display to flash a number that is the number of items to be located which are carried by the shelf.

10. A method, comprising:  
entering user information into a processor controlling a dispensing cabinet;  
said processor unlocking certain doors of the dispensing cabinet in response to said user information;

choosing a query mode;  
identifying an item for which information is sought;  
displaying information for the identified item;  
logging off; and  
locking the unlocked doors.

11. The method of claim 10 additionally comprising the step of entering patient information.

12. The method of claim 11 additionally comprising the steps of opening one of the unlocked doors, selecting a compartment, entering the number of items taken, and closing the opened door.

13. The method of claim 10 wherein said step of choosing a query mode includes choosing from among a dispense, locate, return, query and restock mode.

14. The method of claim 10 wherein said step of identifying an item for which information is sought includes one of picking an item from a pick list, inputting identifying information with a keypad, and barcode scanning.

15. A method, comprising:  
entering user information into a processor controlling a dispensing cabinet;  
said processor unlocking certain doors of the dispensing cabinet in response to said user information;

entering patient information into the processor;

choosing a query mode;

identifying an item for which information is sought;

displaying information for the identified item;

opening an unlocked door;

selecting a compartment;

identifying the number of items taken from the selected compartment;

displaying the number of items taken on a display;

closing the opened door;

logging off; and

locking the unlocked doors.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein said step of choosing a query mode includes choosing from among a dispense, locate, return, query and restock mode.

17. The method of claim 15 wherein said step of identifying an item includes one of picking an item from a pick list, inputting identifying information with a keypad, and barcode scanning.

18. A memory device carrying a set of instructions which, when executed, perform a method comprising:

receiving user information;

unlocking certain doors of a dispensing cabinet in response to said user information;

receiving mode information identifying a locate mode;

receiving information identifying an item to be located;

flashing a display positioned on a shelf within the cabinet with the number of items held by that shelf which are to be located;

receiving a log off instruction; and  
locking the unlocked doors.

19. The memory device of claim 18 additionally comprising the step of receiving patient information.

20. A memory device carrying a set of instructions which, when executed, perform a method comprising:

receiving user information;  
unlocking certain doors of a dispensing cabinet in response to said user information;  
receiving patient information;  
receiving mode information identifying a locate mode;  
receiving information identifying an item to be located;  
flashing a display positioned on a shelf within the cabinet with the number of items held by that shelf which are to be located;  
receiving information selecting a compartment;  
zeroing the display in response to the selection of a compartment;  
receiving the number of items taken from the selected compartment;  
displaying the number of items taken on the display;  
receiving a log off instruction; and  
locking the unlocked doors.

21. A memory device carrying a set of instructions which, when executed, perform a method comprising:

receiving user information;  
unlocking certain doors of a dispensing cabinet in response to said user information;  
receiving information identifying a query mode;  
receiving information identifying an item for which information is sought;  
displaying information for the identified item;  
receiving a log off instruction; and  
locking the unlocked doors.

22. The memory device of claim 21 additionally comprising the step of receiving patient information.

23. A memory device carrying a set of instructions which, when executed, perform a method comprising:

- receiving user information;

- unlocking certain doors of the dispensing cabinet in response to said user information;

- receiving patient information;

- receiving information identifying a query mode;

- receiving information identifying an item for which information is sought;

- displaying information for the identified item;

- receiving information selecting a compartment;

- receiving information identifying the number of items taken from the selected compartment;

- displaying the number of items taken on a display;

- receiving a log off instruction; and

- locking the unlocked doors.